



Jesus Has Power Over Disease

3

Key Theme

- Jesus is God.

Key Passages

- Mark 2:1–12; John 9:1–7

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the two ways Jesus healed the paralytic.
- Explain why Jesus healed the blind man.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will review the memory verse by completing the Memory Verse Review Sheet.

- Write on the board, “What type of healing did Jesus bring?”
- Print one Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.



Studying God's Word

Jesus was compassionate and loving toward people who were sick. He often showed His compassion by healing them. But this was not the main reason Jesus healed. Jesus healed so others would see the power of God in Him, and God would be glorified. Not only did Jesus heal physical disease, but He was able to forgive sins—healing men's souls for all eternity!

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.



Activity: Purpose in Suffering

Students will examine biblical passages that deal with the purpose of suffering for the Christian and the claims by some that all Christians will be healed of all disease and suffering in this life.

- Print one Purpose in Suffering Answer Key from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use.
- Student Guides
- Pencils



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages listed above along with this background.

Jesus came to do His Father's will. Part of that mission was to present who He was and who had sent Him. The miracles He performed confirmed these things. Jesus truly was God in the flesh, the Creator, the Messiah, and the Son of God.

The Gospel of Mark reveals Jesus as the compassionate, suffering servant who came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45). He often revealed His servant's heart and compassion to the people He ministered to, especially those He encountered who were sick (Mark 1:41, 5:19, 6:34, 8:2).

But Jesus was not concerned primarily with physical healing. He came to do His Father's will. And that included providing a way for sinners to have eternal life (John 5:24). This could only be accomplished through spiritual healing—through the forgiveness of sins wrought by sincere repentance and faith in the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

The account of Jesus healing the paralytic is an example of His ability and desire to heal physically as well as spiritually. As Jesus preached in a house in Capernaum, a large crowd had gathered and the house became full (Mark 2:2). Four men came to the house with a paralytic friend on a bed, presumably to be healed. Seeing the crowded house, they went up on the clay roof, dug a hole in the roof, and lowered their friend down to Jesus (Mark 2:3–4). Jesus saw their faith and said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

Jesus ignored the physical condition of the man and spoke directly to the man's more serious problem—the sin in his heart. The scribes immediately accused Jesus of blasphemy as they considered that no one can forgive sins except God (Mark 2:6–7).

Jesus answered, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'?" There is some irony here. It is easier to say the words, "Your sins are forgiven you," since the forgiveness cannot be seen. And yet, forgiving sins is the more difficult of the tasks since only God can forgive sins—and the price He demands for that forgiveness is immeasurable.

Jesus continued in order to confirm plainly that He is God. He told the man to rise, take his bed, and go home (Mark 2:11). This healing revealed and con-

firmed that Jesus, as God, not only has power to heal but to forgive sins and grant eternal life!

Another healing miracle of Jesus is recorded in John 9. This miracle concerned a man who had been blind from birth. The disciples wondered if the reason that this man was born blind was because he or his parents had sinned. Jesus replied, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him" (John 9:3). This man's blindness was not a direct result of personal sin, but rather that Jesus might heal his blindness, and thus display the glory of God, and His own deity.

Jesus showed His compassion and His mercy to those who were both physically sick and spiritually sick. He has power over disease and sickness. And He can forgive sins! He is truly God.

And for all who receive Him, repent of their sins, and accept the forgiveness He offers, there is a greater promise: that one day, our lowly bodies will be transformed to be like His glorious body. In heaven sin will be conquered, and there will be no more sickness, sorrow, or death (Revelation 21:4).

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

There are those today who claim that God's will is for everyone be healed. They assert that physical healing is guaranteed to believers based on Jesus's death on the Cross. All we have to do is believe—to name it and claim it. But is this what the Bible teaches? Is it God's will that everyone be healed of sickness during their earthly lives?

We know that in God's original creation there was no sickness or death. God created everything "very good." But when Adam and Eve sinned, God cursed the world, and it is now under bondage to corruption (Romans 8:20–22). Now people get sick and die. There are natural causes of disease, such as viruses, bacteria, defective genes, and so forth. Then we have war, accidents, and disasters that may result in injury, paralysis, and disfigurement. The record of Scripture, history, and our own experience tells us that believers are not exempt from any of these difficulties.

Were believers in the New Testament always healed? The answer is "No." There are several biblical examples where God did not heal people. Take the Apostle Paul, for example. He had a "thorn in the flesh"

from Satan that afflicted him. He prayed three times that the Lord might heal him of this infirmity, but God did not (2 Corinthians 12:9). Timothy was another who suffered from an ailment. We don't know the exact nature of it, but Paul encouraged Timothy to "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23).

In 2 Timothy 4:20, Paul says, "Erastus stayed at Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick." Paul, who had healed others, could not or did not heal Trophimus. He left him sick. Paul no doubt prayed for Trophimus, but for some reason God chose not to heal him. And then there was Epaphroditus, a helper to Paul and servant to the Philippians. He was sick to the point of death, but the Lord spared his life (Philippians 2:25–30). Why did God allow this righteous servant of God to almost die? When he finally recovered, Paul said it was because "God had mercy on him."

If it were God's will that all believers be healed, then why would God not heal these men of faith? Why doesn't God heal everyone? There are several biblical reasons.

First, God does not always respond to our desires in the way that we would want Him to. He frequently allows circumstances that we would not have chosen for ourselves. We call this sovereignty. God is sovereign over His creation, over us, over our circumstances. God sovereignly directs the circumstances of our lives and allows or permits things as He wills (Daniel 4:35; Psalm 115:3). As the potter, He has the right to do with the clay (us!) as He wishes (Jeremiah 18; Romans 9). Is God supposed to give us what we want, even if He knows that something else is better? Doesn't God reserve the right to give us the best possible good according to His wisdom and knowledge (Romans 8:28)? Maybe more than being healed, God wants us to see and understand life from His perspective—something we cannot do as long as we think the world revolves around us.

A second reason that God may choose not to heal is to reveal His power in another way. Paul asked God to remove his thorn in the flesh. God responded, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul understood that the weakness caused by his infirmity was an avenue for God's power to be shown in his life. He wrote, "Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in per-

secutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9–10). Suffering can be a tool of sanctification, like rough sandpaper that smooths and finishes.

A third reason that God may not heal us is because our physical condition is not His primary concern. Our Father's first priority is His own glory. Sometimes He may be best glorified when someone is healed, as in the case of the man born blind in John 9. But sometimes God's glory may be better revealed by how a child of His responds to difficulties, sicknesses, and trials. Throughout history, God has been glorified and honored in the lives of faithful saints who have clung to Him no matter the difficulty, pain, or distress.

A fourth reason that God may not heal us is to equip us to help others. When we undergo suffering and trials, we are comforted by God. And that comfort that we receive is not just for ourselves, but we are to comfort others who are experiencing the same things with the comfort that we have received from God (2 Corinthians 1:3–11).

And finally we must realize that if we are believers, we can look forward to the day when God will wipe away our tears and remove all pain and grief (Revelation 21:4). God will heal all our diseases, but that day has not yet come. We are still in our mortal bodies, subject to pain, disease, and death. And there is a present purpose for our suffering as it shapes us, challenges us, conforms us to the image of Christ, reveals God's power in weakness, and draws our hope toward eternity (James 1:2–4; 2 Corinthians 4:16–18).

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear Jesus, I am delighted to discover new things about you each time I study your Word. I never want to presume to already know everything about you. Through this lesson, I see that the decision to heal is based more on your glory than our faith. And more importantly, Lord, I know you came to heal spiritually through the forgiveness of sins. I pray, Lord, that my students will one day come to that healing of their souls as they repent and trust in you.

Review

If you recall our lesson last week, we talked about the power that Jesus exercised over nature. He calmed the raging wind and sea and directed an abundance of fish to fill a net cast during the middle of the day.

? **Why does it make sense that Jesus was able to exercise power over nature?** *As was discussed in the lesson last week, Jesus is the Creator (John 1; Hebrews 1; Colossians 1). As the Creator, He has all authority over everything that He has made. This control applies to the movement of molecules in the air and water as well as the movements of creatures in the seas—all of which He created.*

The sovereignty and omnipotence of Jesus is on full display when we read of His control over nature. Yet He never used that power in a selfish way but in ways that always glorified the Father who had sent Him to earth as the Savior. As He worked these miracles, they supported His claim to be God in the flesh, and many trusted in Him upon seeing these miracles.

Today we are going to continue looking at the authority and power that Jesus has over His creation in the healing of disease and brokenness in the world.



► Write on the board, “What type of healing did Jesus bring?”



Studying God’s Word

READ THE WORD

Let’s read Mark 2:1–12 together. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? **Where else can we find this same account?** *It is also included in Matthew 9:1–8 and Luke 5:17–26.*
- ? **Where was Jesus at this time?** *He was in the region of Galilee in the city of Capernaum.*
- ? **Where was He teaching?** *He was teaching inside a house. This was likely Peter’s house where Jesus had established His “home base” in Galilee (Mark 1:29).*
- ? **What happened when the people heard Jesus was in the house?** *They filled the house to the doors.*
- ? **What did Jesus do for those assembled there?** *He preached the word to them.*
- ? **What is the “word” that He preached to them?** *In the previous context of Mark 1:14–15, Jesus preached “the gospel of the kingdom of God” calling people to “repent and believe the gospel.” He was preaching and teaching the same message (see Mark 1:21 and 1:39).*
- ? **How does the paralytic man arrive at the house?** *He was carried by four men on a bed.*

? **How severe was his paralysis?** *Considering he had to be carried on a mat by four men, it most have been very extensive.*

? **How did the men get their friend to Jesus since the house was packed?**
They opened a hole in the roof and lowered their friend to where Jesus was.

? **What did their efforts demonstrate?** *Jesus acknowledged their faith, presumably for their effort to get their friend before Jesus and trusting He could heal him.*

? **What did Jesus do rather than healing the man of his paralysis?** *The surrounding context talks of Jesus healing many people, so it seems a bit odd that Jesus turned His attention to forgiving the man's sins rather than healing him. Luke 5:17 actually mentions the power to heal in the context of the account.*

? **Who are the scribes mentioned in verse 6?** *These are teachers of the Law who had come to hear Jesus's teaching.*

? **What does Luke 5:17 add to this point in his parallel account?** *Luke explains that these were members of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law who had come from the regions of Galilee and Judea, even Jerusalem, to hear what Jesus was teaching.*

Luke 5:17

? **How did the scribes respond to Jesus forgiving the man's sins?** *They reasoned in their hearts that Jesus was speaking blasphemies since only God could forgive sins.*

? **Did they say anything out loud?** *They were not speaking out loud but reasoning within themselves. We would likely attribute these thoughts to the brain rather than the heart. Luke 5:22 says Jesus "perceived their thoughts."*

? **How did they conclude that Jesus was speaking blasphemies?** *Since only God can forgive sins, and Jesus was claiming to forgive the man's sins, Jesus was claiming to be God. For a mere man to claim to be God is a blasphemous statement.*

? **How did Jesus know what they were thinking?** *He perceived in His spirit what they were reasoning in their hearts.*

? **What does this ability to know the thoughts of men indicate about Jesus?**
This is a supernatural ability that can only be explained by revelation from God. Since Jesus is God in the flesh, "He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man" (John 2:24-25).

John 2:24-25

? **What is the answer to Jesus's question about whether it is easier to heal or forgive sins?** *Both are only possible by the power of God.*

? **Why did Jesus follow the act of forgiveness with an act of healing?** *He said He did it so that all might know He had the power to forgive sins. It was a physical sign to affirm the spiritual reality. Performing a physical and miraculous sign was a common affirmation that a prophet's words were from God.*

? **How long did the healing take?** *The man rose immediately, so it was an instantaneous healing.*

? **How did the paralytic respond?** *He rose and carried his bed through the crowd. Luke 5:25 says that he departed "glorifying God."*

Luke 5:25

? **How did the crowd respond?** *They marveled and glorified God.*

? **How many healings did the paralytic receive?** *He actually received two healings—he was healed spiritually through the forgiveness of his sins and physically by the removal of his paralysis.*

Discover the Truth

Imagine yourself sitting in that room. You hear this man teaching about forgiveness of sin and things start falling through the roof. Soon, a man descends on a bed. You might expect you are about to see a miraculous healing like the ones you have heard about . . . but then something more amazing happens. Jesus announces to the man that his sins are forgiven. But only God can do that!

Even the scribes and Pharisees knew what Jesus was claiming. There was no doubt. They instantly believed this man was a blasphemer. Imagine their shock when He announced to them what they were thinking. In fact, it was they who were blaspheming by denying Jesus was God. They just didn't realize it at the time.

OMNISCIENT

? **What attribute of God was revealed when Jesus was able to read the minds of the scribes and see the faith of the paralytic?** *Omniscient—Jesus knew all about the men. This is confirmed by John 2:24–25. Refer to Attributes of God Poster.*

MERCIFUL

The Son of Man knew the faith in this man who was paralyzed. His first act was to offer Him forgiveness for the sins he had committed against a holy God. He was merciful toward this sinner and offered him forgiveness. But He didn't stop there. Jesus also healed him of his paralysis. We don't know how long he had been confined to his bed, but can you imagine the freedom this man felt?! He had been healed of his brokenness—both spiritually and physically. He responded by glorifying God.

GRACIOUS

In these acts of spiritual and physical compassion, Jesus left those around Him with no doubt about what they had just experienced. They had just witnessed God heal a man and, in that act, the confirmation of the man's forgiveness before God.

Jesus, calling Himself the Son of Man, has the power to forgive sins and heal. There can be no doubt that Jesus is God.



READ THE WORD

John 9:1–41

Let's look at another healing that Jesus performed about two years after the healing of the paralytic. John 9:1–41 is a lot to digest, but we are going to pull out a few main thoughts, and you can spend some time digging deeper into the text later. As we read this passage, the main thought we are looking for is why Jesus healed this particular blind man while He was in Jerusalem for a feast. *Have someone read the passage aloud. If time is short, focus on verses 1–7 and the fact that the miracle was done to show God's power in the healing.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? **How long had the man been blind?** *From birth.*
- ? **What did the disciples wonder about the man?** *They wondered whether his blindness was the result of his personal sin or the sin of his parents.*
- ? **What does this reveal about their understanding of disease?** *They believed that this blindness was the result of some personal sin. This was a common belief of the time and is not uncommon today.*
- ? **Whose sin had caused this blindness?** *Jesus said that it was neither the man nor his parents.*
- ? **What did Jesus reveal as the purpose for the blindness?** *He said that he was blind so that the works of God could be revealed in his blindness.*
- ? **What does Exodus 4:11 tell us about the origin of disorders?** *God, speaking to Moses, told him that God is responsible for making the mouths of people, even people who are deaf, mute, and blind.*
- ? **Why did Jesus heal this blind man?** *He healed the man as part of doing the works that the Father had sent Him to do.*
- ? **What method did Jesus use to accomplish the healing?** *He spat on the ground to make clay, anointed the blind man's eyes, and told the man to go and wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam.*
- ? **Was the man healed?** *Yes, he came back from the pool able to see.*
- ? **How did the neighbors of the man respond?** *They argued about whether he was the same blind man whom they had known.*
- ? **What was the testimony of the man before the neighbors and the Pharisees?** *He told them all that Jesus had made clay and anointed his eyes and that he was able to see after washing.*
- ? **Why did his parents refuse to vouch for their son's healing?** *They were afraid of the Jewish rulers and did not want to be put out of the synagogue.*
- ? **In verse 24, what did the Pharisees demand of the man who was healed?** *They called him to give glory to God by denouncing Jesus as a sinner.*
- ? **How did the man reason that Jesus was not a sinner?** *He said that God would not hear His prayer for healing if Jesus was a sinner, so Jesus must be a prophet of God to be able to work such a miracle.*
- ? **What did proclaiming the truth earn the man?** *He was kicked out of the synagogue.*
- ? **When Jesus came back to the man, how did Jesus reveal Himself to the man?** *He told him that He was the Son of God.*
- ? **How did the man respond to this knowledge?** *He announced his belief in Jesus as the Son of God and worshipped Him. His belief led to worship.*

Exodus 4:11

? **As Jesus interacted with the Pharisees, what connection did He draw to the healing of this man?** *He connected the physical blindness of the man to spiritual blindness. The man who acknowledged his blindness, both physical and spiritual, was healed of both. The Pharisees would not acknowledge their spiritual blindness, even though they were physically able to see, and could not find forgiveness for their sins.*

Discover the Truth

As we think about these two healings, there are some very clear parallels and some very clear differences. In both of these cases, the physical healing was accompanied by a spiritual healing. In this account, Jesus made it clear that the healing was done by the will of the Father to bring glory to God. And that was the response of those who were trusting in God, believing that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus had performed the works the Father had sent Him to do, and the power of God was evident through Him—even the power to



Purpose in Suffering

MATERIALS

- Purpose in Suffering Answer Key
- Student Guides
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

The students will be considering several passages related to healing and God's purposes in it. You may wish to include some specific denominational teachings regarding healing at this point in the lesson.

We see many examples of healings in the Bible, but there are also instances in Scripture, and in our own experience, where healing from a disease or disorder does not come despite crying out to God for that healing.

Take the next few minutes to work through the Purpose in Suffering activity in your

Student Guide, and we will discuss those **ideas together.** *Have students work in small groups to answer the questions in their Student Guides.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Let's talk about what you discovered about suffering and healing. But keep in mind that this is a very complex topic, and we could spend many hours uncovering all of the truths on this topic. *Use the Purpose in Suffering Answer Key to discuss the students' answers to the questions.*

God has many different purposes in suffering and healing and we need to walk in faith, trusting that our Father knows best how to grow us to be more like Christ and how to glorify Himself through our trials.





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

As Jesus walked the earth, He performed many miracles of healing. While healing was not His primary mission, it was a part of what the Father sent the Son to accomplish. These miracles served many different specific functions in the lives of individuals, but the overall purpose was to glorify God and affirm that Jesus is God.

As God in the flesh, Jesus had the authority on the earth to forgive sins. Demonstrating His authority to heal both physically and spiritually was a major purpose in these events and authenticated the words He spoke through the works He performed.

All of this work was done as a part of the restoration that will be finalized at the Consummation. At the Fall, there was brokenness that entered the perfect creation. Both the spiritual perfection and the physical perfection were corrupted by sin. As we think about the words we use to describe the corruption and brokenness, DIS-order and DIS-ease are two that come to mind in light of our passages today. The original creation was in perfect order, now it is in DIS-order. There was perfect ease in the function of the body, but now there is DIS-ease. Things went out of control and got hard.

As we think about those words, we often compare things to our current state. We think of ourselves as normal and those who are different as those with diseases or disorders. But each person on this planet bears disease and disorder in his or her body as a result of the corruption that Adam brought to the world. Just as we should not seek to understand what is spiritually correct by comparing our sins to the sins of others (there is always someone “worse” than us), we should not think of disease and disorders in light of what we see in the world around us. It is the original perfect creation to which we should be comparing the current state.

While we may all receive some form of physical healing, we are all in need of spiritual healing from the corruption we have inherited from Adam. This is the miracle of forgiveness that Jesus offered to both of the men He healed as they put their faith in Him, believing that He could heal them of their physical and spiritual corruption. And all of this was done to glorify God and offer Him the worship that He alone is due.

Jesus is God, and when we look to Him for forgiveness of sin, He will heal us of our sinful condition and give us eternal life. And, while our physical healing may not come on this earth, we can be assured that when He brings about the consummation of all things, we will be restored to the original perfection without disease or disorder of any kind. Then we can worship in perfect holiness and harmony knowing that sin will never corrupt us again.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? Many people think Jesus was just a good teacher or prophet, but deny that He was God. How could you use one of these passages we studied today to show someone that Jesus is God? *Explaining the biblical truths from these passages—that Jesus is God and can both heal physically and forgive sins—can place that truth before the skeptic, and the Holy Spirit may be pleased to use that truth to convict this person of their sin and call them to the Savior.*
- ? As we think about the two types of healing we saw in our study today, which is more important, physical healing or spiritual healing? *While we often want the immediate relief of physical healing we know God can offer, those who are physically whole can still find themselves in hell facing God's judgment if they die in their sins. As we take an eternal perspective, spiritual healing through the forgiveness of sins is a much higher priority. While easing physical suffering may be a good desire, if we truly love the person we should be seeking their eternal benefit, not just their physical and temporal benefit.*
- ? What struggles have you experienced with suffering and disease in your life, and how does what we have discussed from the text today help you understand that idea better? *Discuss various answers.*
- ? Other than instant miraculous healing, what other means has God provided for our healing? *Through the ability to study nature, we have found cures to some diseases and ways to alleviate the suffering that has resulted from the Fall and Curse. Even though these healings come from an "ordinary" source like medicines or surgeries, they are an example of God working in the world to bring healing.*

? **When a brother or sister in Christ is not healed of a sickness, what is the danger of accusing them that they don't have enough faith, or they would be healed?** *Because we cannot know another's heart nor the fullness of the plans of God, we cannot assume that it is a lack of faith that is preventing the healing. In fact, to suggest to someone with a lifelong debilitating disease like Multiple Sclerosis or dementia that they would be healed if they had more faith is cruel and could lead them to despair. We should encourage them, praying for God's healing as He wills.*

? **Many skeptics will ask why God does not heal today in such miraculous ways. How can we respond to those who say that if God did a miracle of healing right in front of them they would believe?** *One way to respond would be to show them the words of Jesus as he related the account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19–31. Just as the rich man's family had the testament of Moses and the prophets (a term referring to all of the writings of the Old Testament) to trust, today the Bible with both testaments stands as a witness to God's plan of salvation for mankind. Similarly, at the raising of Lazarus from the dead in John 11, some who witnessed the miracle believed and others did not. Witnessing a miracle does not provide a surety of belief in the person and work of Jesus.*



MEMORY VERSE

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for providing for healing, especially spiritual healing.
- Praise God for His power over His creation to heal the sick.
- Ask God for healing for those who are suffering.

